

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 07294 232219Z

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 INR-05 PM-03 SP-02 PRS-01 SAB-01 L-02

RSC-01 /026 W

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R 232113Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2616

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 7294

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, PQ, PFOR, PN

SUBJECT: PANAMANIAN SQUATTERS IN CANAL ZONE

1. WILL BE RECALLED THAT EARLIER THIS YEAR GEN. TORRIJOS PROMISED RESETTLEMENT OF SQUATTERS FROM CANAL ZONE BY DEC. 31. SOUTHCOM PLANNED TO SEND LARGE MILITARY PATROLS INTO AFFECTED AREAS DURING NEXT FEW DAYS TO DETERMINE NUMBER OF SQUATTERS AND TO VERIFY WHETHER ANY SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION IN SQUATTERS AND PLANTED AREAS HAS TAKEN PLACE. GOP WAS SO INFORMED.

2. AMBASSADOR RECEIVED MESSAGES FROM GEN. TORRIJOS AND NATIONAL GUARD G-2, LTC NORIEGA, EXPRESSING CONCERN THAT EXTREMISTS IN VERACRUZ AREA (NEAR HOWARD AFB) COULD EXPLOIT PATROL ACTIVITIES AS PRETEXT TO STIMULATE ANTI-US FEELINGS. THEY REQUESTED AMBASSADOR'S ASSISTANCE IN HAVING PATROLS DELAYED. AMBASSADOR CONSULTED WITH CINC AND OBTAINED HIS AGREEMENT TO SUSPEND PATROLS FOR TIME BEING.

3. CINC INFORMED AMBASSADOR THAT LTC NORIEGA CALLED ON HIM DEC. 23 TO REPEAT GOP CONCERNS ABOUT POTENTIAL TROUBLES RESULTING FROM U.S. PATROLS AND TO REQUEST POSTPONEMENT WHILE GOP RESETTLEMENT PLANS PROGRESSED. NORIEGA ALSO ASKED THAT IF PATROL ACTIVITY PLANNED THAT

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PAGE 02 PANAMA 07294 232219Z

IT BE CARRIED OUT IN CONJUNCTION WITH NATIONAL GUARD.

CINC AND G-2 AGREED THAT THEIR REPS WOULD MEET AT
BEGINNING OF NEW YEAR TO PLAN A JOINT SURVEY OPERATION.
CINC ASKED G-2 FOR ESTIMATE OF TIME IT WILL TAKE GOP TO
COMPLETE RESETTLEMENT AND LATTER RESPONDED APPROXIMATELY
MAY 1975. G-2 ADDED ORDER HAD BEEN ISSUED THAT NO NEW
PLANTING WOULD BE PERMITTED AFTER DEC. 31.

4. GOVT-CONTROLLED MATUTINO OF DEC. 23 CARRIES FULL PAGE
OF PHOTOGRAPHS SHOWING NEW RURAL HOUSING BEING OCCUPIED
BY SQUATTERS RELOCATED FROM MADDEN LAKE AREA OF CANAL ZONE WITH
PROMINENT MENTION OF ROLE PLAYED BY LTC NORIEGA.
JORDEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, SQUATTERS, LAND TENURE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 DEC 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: shawdg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974PANAMA07294
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740373-0417
From: PANAMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741215/aaaaamdk.tel
Line Count: 73
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19 SEP 2002 by rowelle0>; APPROVED <19 MAR 2003 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PANAMANIAN SQUATTERS IN CANAL ZONE
TAGS: PBOR, PFOR, PQ, PN
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005